



Funding music projects that change young lives

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Music Projects

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South Africa

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India

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Musequality's first grant helped M-Lisada repair their battered instruments.

The Mummy Foundation

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**Hooked on music****M-Lisada Brass Band, Kampala, Uganda**

MLISADA stands for Music, Life Skills, And Destitution Alleviation, and its mission is to reduce the number of children living on the streets and provide opportunities to less privileged children in Kampala, Uganda. The organisation provides a safe haven while delivering education, mentoring and cultural activities, and attempts to reunite street children with their families. Project leader Bosco Segawa says that seeing the joy in the faces of the reunited families is 'like watching the sun rising'.

The story began with music. Back in the mid-1990s, a group of street kids started hanging around the studio of a German trumpet teacher. After several unsuccessful attempts to chase them away, the teacher, Christopher Kowlezyk, invited a few of them in for lessons.

The boys were soon hooked on music instead of drugs, and, in a short time, had formed their own group with dented and battered instruments supplied by Kowlezyk. Living in one room, sharing three to a mattress, they supported one another and paid their own school fees out of their earnings from the band's occasional gigs.



The brass band is still at the heart of M-Lisada, and is its main source of income. It still rehearses in the same place as when they started in 1996 – under a large tree. Musequality has supported the band for several years, paying for the repair of their instruments (they had been plugging holes with chewing gum), enabling the purchase of a bass drum, and providing a grant to cut two CDs.

The band performed in the packed Mandela National Stadium before the Uganda Cranes v Guinea Bissau match in June 2011. Several street children have been enrolled in brass band programmes, with six achieving fine results in ABRSM examinations.

Thanks to grants from HIPS (Health Initiatives for the Private Sector, a USAID-funded project), 16 M-Lisada children have acquired skills in sewing, tailoring, and craftwork that provide an income. M-Lisada's Educate project is training young people in entrepreneurship and leadership to help them start their own businesses – and a team has already started rearing and selling chickens.

You have to have time management and discipline if you want to perform for a function. You have to arrive on time, not be 15 minutes late. Everyone has to learn that!

Segawa Bosco
M-Lisada leader



Segawa Bosco conducting the band.



Musequality provided funds for M-Lisada to produce two cds.

Musequality has also arranged for M-Lisada to provide brass band training to disabled children and orphans at the **Good Shepherd Home**, in Kampala, funded by Bracknell and Wokingham Community Band (BWCB).



'Well, we have already bought the bass drum and the tenor drum and it has really changed our music. We just wish you were here to hear the sound. For the past week a group of street kids came to our home and they wanted to stay with us, but we talked to them about the place not being big enough for us to stay all together so they just come for music in the evening and they go back.'

Bosco Segawa M-Lisada Brass Band

Kampala projects unite to celebrate Easter



Children from **M-Lisada**, **Tender Talents Magnet School** and the **Good Shepherd Home** in Kampala gathered at the M-Lisada home to celebrate Easter 2012 with a performance of carols, acrobatics and dance. Local people participated in a 'community cleaning' activity, and children from the surrounding area were invited to enjoy special 'Easter moments'.

The event helped to raise funds for **George**, an 11-year-old boy who is physically disabled and cannot walk, stand or speak. The money will go towards constructing a small one-room house for George and his family, who previously survived by begging in the streets.

Report from Uganda

Executive director **Jeremy Bradshaw** and trustee **Jean Buck** visited Musequality's projects in Uganda in December 2011 to find out how the children involved in our music schemes are progressing. They received a warm welcome from M-Lisada and were able to discuss various management issues. [More](#)



Cultural project yields rich dividends

Destitute children from the surrounding community in Kampala have been participating in M-Lisada's cultural dance and drama project. Progress has been remarkable – three boys and three girls have been admitted into established performing groups, such as Ndere Troupe. The children have also started earning an income from the performing skills they have learnt at M-Lisada through performances at weddings, celebrations and other events.

The group won a prize at the Bayimba International Festival of the Arts in 2011, and after the event several visitors from East African countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Congo came to the M-Lisada reception centre to meet the street children.

● M-Lisada project leader **Bosco Segawa** reports that in 2011, over 25 street children were reunited with their families.

M-Lisada leader inspired by meeting of minds



Bosco Segawa has attended a conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, entitled 'Helping street children return home'. The event was organised by **Retrak**, a UK-based charity that works with street children in Africa. Bosco was accompanied by **Simon Yiga**, director of the **Kampala Music School**, which has close ties with M-Lisada. Musequality helped to fund their trip.

Among the lessons Bosco took from the conference was the importance of involving the children in all discussions and decision-making. It is also vital to employ young workers who have lived on the streets themselves and understand what street life is like.

Bosco says he learned a great deal from the experience of others, such as Tom Hewitt, director of Umthombo, a Durban-based organisation, who uses activities such as surfing, drama and music to attract children away from the streets.

Documentary-maker dodges food riots to film our work

An 18-minute film showcasing Musequality's projects in Africa has been completed by documentary-maker **Steve Maud**.

Steve began filming in Kampala in March 2011, spending a couple of days with each of the projects. This coincided with heavy rioting and protests at the exorbitant rise in petrol prices, which meant people started to starve, unable to pay the high food prices.



'I was actually filming an interview with Bosco from M-Lisada when a whole mob of people

started running towards me, following by the police firing guns,' Steve says. 'A testament to the project I was filming, they barricaded me in behind closed gates; the police had heard there was a white man filming in the vicinity and wanted to talk to me, but the boys at M-Lisada hid me in the instrument room until the trouble had passed.'

The film captures the enthusiasm of many of the children involved in the projects, who explain in vivid terms what the opportunity to participate in music-making has meant to them.

Watch the film [here](#).

The Mummy Foundation, Kampala

The Mummy Foundation was set up by M-Lisada leader **Bosco Segawa** in memory of his mother, to support vulnerable young women who might otherwise be drawn into crime and prostitution in the slums of

Kampala. [More](#)



Design: [Jane Davies](#)